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ABSTRACT

The process of matching teaching materials and methods to the student's learning style and ability level in foreign language classes is explored. The Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) model offers a diagnostic process for the identification of style. This process can be applied to the language learning setting as a way of presenting material to the whole class and also as a way of creating new strategies for a mismatched student. Each student has unique resources or strategies for transforming sound into purposeful communication through the process of meaningful association. NLP bases its model on the tenet that experience precedes language, similar to the language acquisition process of children. The relationship between the sensory experience which evokes an object and its name must be identified as the channel through which the individual learns language. Examples are given of the application of NLP to students who use the visual and kinesic channels of experience for learning language. (RW)

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The Old Brain, the New Mirror: Matching Teaching and Learning Styles in Foreign Language Class (based on Neuro-Linguistic Programming)

John K. Knowles

Matching language material to the student's strength is a fascinating process, one made remarkably easier with the systematic use of the information available in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (N.L.P.).[1] In the following notes, I will pursue in some detail what is meant by matching and mismatching in an educational setting, in order to define the problem. There will follow a description of the diagnostic process of the identification of style offered by N.L.P. The remainder of the notes demonstrate its applicability to the specific language learning setting, first as a way of presenting material to the whole class and, secondly, as a way of creating new strategies for a mismatched student.

Matching and mismatching accounts for some interesting paradoxes which occur frequently in the foreign language classroom. One paradox is the successful student in other academic disciplines who is an abysmal student in our classes. Why? Another paradox is the language major student who receives C in the academic setting, studies in the foreign culture, and returns an A or B student. Why? At the same time, there is no question that these two students are successful processors of information and consummate copiers. They have survived their parents, the educational setting, and have learned an uncountable number of discrete functions in order to live in the general culture and their particular environment. Then, we must surmise that neither the classroom nor the students were "at fault" but rather, that these students' strengths and the teachings style of presentation of the material did not match as appropriately as they might have.

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The challenge for the instructor and the student is dual: to become more efficient with matched students and to identify the point of mismatching and devise appropriate strategies that match up to the currently mismatched student's

strengths. The following anecdote demonstrates how this process of identification of strengths and weaknesses and the application of an appropriate strategy moves the individual from total failure to unexpected success. Dr. Roger Sperry recounts the incident. Sperry, an innovative brain surgeon involved in the early radical surgery of cutting the corpus callosum in severely epileptic patients, tell of the time he met a brain damaged patient. Sperry asked this patient a series of very concrete, routine questions: name, age, length of time in the hospital. The patient's responses were garbled, painful mumbles.

As Sperry studied his chart, he saw that the patient had been in speech therapy daily for three years. Sperry, ever mindful of the principle of matching, was totally chagrined and nonplussed that the patient was obliged the endless frustration of daily speech therapy when there was no possibility for recovering even minimum speech.

However, he saw that the brain damage was to the speech hemisphere while the other hemisphere, that which sings, was undamaged. Sperry asked the patient if he wanted to talk. To the affirmation, Sperry asked him to sing: "Well, Hello Dolly, well, Hello, Dolly." The patient did. He now "sings" all conversations and leaves out the music.[2]

Language teachers are not in a position to participate in such high drama. However, it is the same process Sperry followed which beckons us. We must identify the student's strengths and match those with the material they are endeavoring to learn. In the largest sense, what we must teach the student is the way, his own individual way, to transform sound into purposeful experience through the process of "meaningful association." These two words need further explanation.

As a human, the student has within him complete structures which have evolved over time as responses to his world. These structures - often unconscious, habitual reactions to stimulae - call them strategies - are the student's resources

brought into play in order to confront and make sense of the environment within which he functions. As new information becomes available, the student must process it by making the old structures, through comparison and contrast, accomodate the new information, or to develop new structures into which to order the new information. In this sense, "meaningful association" occurs when the old structure is most completely and efficiently utilized with a minimum amount of distraction.[3]

Specifically, this idea of "meaningful association" is most clearly sensed in the acquisition of a new word in one's fluent language(s). The existing structure is the grammar which accomodates the new word. Other words limit and define experience at the point of new acquisition and "allows" the new word its place in the individual's lexicon. It is associated with the past, compared and contrasted with it, and is "learned".

In the previous anecdote, it is apparent that Dr. Sperry understood that the patient had more than one structure as a resource for speaking. His value to the patient was to aid him in discovering an unused but available structure to meet his purpose.

If we, as language instructors, were to take the broadest view of the students in our classrooms, our job would be measurably eased. Were we to understand and accept the fact that each student, as a human, represents one or more strategies/ structures in tact and available as resources for him to acquire the appropriate information built into the syllabus, our job becomes focused; specifically, to identify these structures and teach the student how to use them actively in the acquisition of the target language.

In the fashion of a schematic, then, it is our common task to build a bridge from the swirling non-sensical, meaningless sound to the structure. It is at this point that the material offered by N.L.P. becomes so helpful for it allows

the participants to identify the most "natural" processes - the particular bridge - of each student. With it, the student is then in the position to transform noise into sound, and sound into experience and experience to be placed within a structure.

Momentarily, I will describe the major tenets of N.L.P. which will aid us in this process and my use of them in the class setting. However, briefly, it is imperative to consider the relationship of language to experience in order to establish the context within which N.L.P. acquires its vitality.

N.L.P. bases its model, in part, on the sequence that experience preceeds language, corresponding to the language acquisition process of children. In this sense, the "noise" of foreign language words stems from the fact that there is no prior experience to which it is attached. Their model suggests that students have or create the experience first and then attach the sound to it.[4]

Every human has had the experience of "knowing" some animal. For our purposes, let us assume that the animal is what we call a dog. It is known by the individual directly, in some sensory way, typically with sight, sound, or touch. It is talked about, in whatever language, in sounds which are not the experience of the dog itself, but, rather, a derivative or second-hand account of the experience of the dog. Thus, the object (dog) is known, originally, directly in some concrete sensory way. When it is named in discourse, the object is evoked and becomes "concrete" again through the sensory dimensions with which it was originally experienced. It is this critical point - the subtle relation between sensory experience and its name - which is the focus of our immediate attention.

If it were possible to ascertain that, in a given individual, the "dog" was most frequently evoked in the same way - i.e., repeatedly through the same "sense" channel - (touch, see, hear, smell, or taste) - and that, generically, the individual used this channel in most cases to evoke a prior experience, then we,

as instructors and students, could use it for the acquisition of new information on the basis of two assumptions: 1) as a processing/accessing system, it would be the most efficient one available for that individual for connecting sound to concrete experience, and 2) as a repository and structure for experience, the individual would have the richest number of words/objects with which to associate the new word/object. This would be the bridge, and N.L.P. the systematic approach.

Within this context of the association of sound to discrete particular sense-data objects, I will offer those particulars of N.L.P. which will aid in the identification of the preferred channel of a given individual. In order to decrease a sense of fatigue which may arise relative to this first step, I hasten to add that most individuals will use one of three channels. Therefore, that which follows, though specified for a given individual generates itself to include three large groupings.

The developers of N.L.P. base their ideas on biologically replicable evidence. The brain stores information under sense classifications. It is retrieved when needed in systematic ways again owing to the brain's nature and structure.[5] The manner in which a given individual retrieves stored information is immediately and directly available to the observer by the use of the retriever's nonverbal behavior, particularly eye movement.

When an individual, assumed to be a right-handed person, is asked a thought provoking question (i.e., "When did your favorite pet die?"), he begins to search for an answer. The observer will notice the eyes move from the questioner/observer as the search begins. There are three major patterns of eye movement, each one indicating a distinct sense/data channel. Pattern one is eye movement up and to the left, or an unfocused stare straight ahead. The eye movement is accessing visual information, such as pictures images, graphs, etc. The second pattern is the movement of the eyes to the lower left, signifying that accessing

is occurring in the verbal channel, in which the searcher hears sounds, voices, tones, music, etc. A third pattern is the eye movement to the lower right which accesses kinesic feelings of temperature, textures, hardness/softness, etc. (Emotions, which may be associated with any sense/data experiences, are to be distinguished from tactile, kinesic feelings.) In the language of N.L.P., the accessed information is referred to as the representational world.

As we listen to the individual describe verbally the representational experience, we find an internal consistency that supports the eye movement pattern. That is, if the individual's eye movements suggest that he is visualizing, it follows that he will use language rich in visuals, particularly in adjectives, verbs and nouns. "I see the dog; it was so pretty, a nice shade of tan, and it looked so frisky. And those eyes, so brown and gentle looking. I remember how it used to jump up on the bed in the morning, with an urgent look on its face. I can just see her she is right here." This same kind of supporting specificity of language may be expected with the other two representational worlds.[6]

N.L.P.'s research further indicates that individuals favor a preferred recall or representational channel over the others. In the above sample, for instance, information about the dog is stored in the kinesic and auditory channels, but is not accessed and remains dormant.

Although the above picture is more or less accurate, it tends to be an oversimplification. Many individuals, in practice, do access all the channels, often as a result of conditioning to solve particular tasks. However, in these more elegant individuals, there is a tendency to rely on one of the channels over the others and it is this predominating channel which must be identified and used as the primary resource for the student learning new information.[7] It is into this representational world that the student must transform sound into meaning. Within it, associations are most fruitfully made since it contains the richest

amount of material.

This is a simple statement, very direct and it pinpoints the entire purpose of a classroom. To be more precise, let us return to the two students in the initial paragraphs and analyze the situation in light of the N.L.P. model. The first student is successful in other academic settings because the subject matter he is studying lends itself fully to his strength. Let us assume that he is a visual student. As he studies his other subjects, he is able to transform word information into pictures - i.e., graphs in economics, flow charts in political science, pictures and data charts in history - to compare and contrast those pictures with others he already has and to insert these word/pictures picture/words into its place. When he is asked to respond to a question, he looks up or stares straight ahead, begins to access the visual information, and the "picture" he needs comes to him. Then, he will describe the picture in words with ease and completeness. His strategy works well, for as the saying has it, a picture is worth thousands of words. He is, then, successful. And he enters the foreign language classroom and experiences distress and frustration, for what he encounters in the foreign language setting are words with no pictures, a series of unconnected strange sounds and noises which escape his former successful strategy. What he experiences is a jumble of interference. Try as he might, he is unable to turn those sounds into pictures. As his frustration continues to grow, he eventually gives up since he simply can't "do" language.

However, if he can be taught to use his strength, and to learn to transform sounds into pictures (again, the distinction between sound and meaningful experience) then his success in the class will invariably increase. One can surmise also that the methodology in the language class was not audio-visual.

The second student finds in the foreign language and cultural setting a

natural match of his representational world. No matter which representational world he uses, he will find a very high incidence of stimulae in it to which he may associate the sound. The sound, then, acquires meaning. Let us assume that the student is kinesic. As he moves in the foreign culture, he will constantly experience it through touch. As he does so, he will hear sounds in the context of touch and recall the sound by recalling the kinesic. An obvious example would be salutations in which the ritualized body movements parallel the language patterns and the two occur simultaneously. We are also able to infer that the classroom methodology for this student involved a very low intensity/frequency level of kinesic experience.

In the light of the above, it would seem that our responsibility is to identify the resources which students bring to class and utilize them as fully as possible. As we become more precise and effective in matching the subject matter to the students' representational worlds, we will come closer to fulfilling the challenge Sperry offers to us.

Before a summation of what the model suggests relative to the instructor and student relationship, it is important that a distinction be made between Neuro-Linguistic Programming and a methodology. Neuro-Linguisitc Programming is a model for communication. Its purpose is to increase the users' awareness that there exists in individuals preferred representational worlds, each rule bound and producing its own kind of language. Accordingly, effective communication occurs when the senders and receivers are consciously functioning in the same representational world.

A pedagogical methodology is a communication technique developed into a set of conventions, or orderly arrangements, which presuppose a concordance between the method and what is to be communicated, i.e., the content. It is logical, self-limiting and specific. A methodology, then, is a technical way in

which each of the representational worlds is to be structured for pedagogical purposes. It is generated as the second step and follows the obligatory prior recognition of the representational world chosen as the focus of communication. Specifically, the auditory representational world produces the oral-aural method; the visual representation world, the "see-say" method; the kinesic representational world, the Total Physical Response method.

To sum up the presentation of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, the hope is that communication in a class is seen in a much wider scope. The N.L.P. model starts from the broadest perspective. From this broad perspective, it will permit the language instructor to increase his awareness of what is happening in his/her class.

Of utmost importance, he recognizes that, as a human, he favors a particular way of relating to reality through one of the three representational worlds. It follows that as a teacher, he tends to depend heavily upon it; examples, drills, realia, games emerge from the favored representational world automatically and naturally. In recognition that he is only one half the communication, the instructor is aware of the receivers. Some members of the class naturally match up with the instructor's representation world and language, a decided plus. The minus if, of course, that some students' representation world will not match up.

In a similar way, a given methodology and its textbook form matches some students processing styles and mismatches others.

The instructor recognizes the correlary; that the students endeavor to associate the subject matter with their strengths to learn it and to file it for later retrieval and that there are three different ways of doing this associative process which are occurring simultaneously.

The instructor, further, senses why this model accounts for the fact that the foreign culture produces its very high learning curve on the basis that all

three representational worlds find a constant flow of experience, be they visual, auditory or kinesic, to which the target language is associated.

The above comments clarify some interesting phenomena. How often are we surprised when a particularly favorite activity suddenly does not produce the normal results in a given class? How often we know, after a few short weeks, that some students are going to do well - "Their kind always do" - and, in the pit of the stomach, that "those others" are not? How often we return to the same kind of activity since results always seem high with its use? How often students who move from one instructor to another encounter unexpected success or failure? No claim is being made that all these situations are a result of matching and mismatching of representational worlds and their respective expressions, but it equally difficult to ignore the model's power to explain at least a portion of these apparent anomalies.

From this broad perspective, the instructor is now in a position to begin to amplify his or her current "natural" way by consciously explaining and presenting information and permitting students to participate in activities in the language of each representational world.

Before I turn to the application of the model consistent with what it indicates to us, it may be helpful to recount what kind of changes it has produced for me relative to more efficient communication. I have been working with this model for the last two and a half years. Prior to my "discovery" of it, I was an individual who had no systematic use of the visual way of representing material since, according to this model, I was kinesic and auditory. Doing what came "naturally", I favored much movement in class, tending towards the Total Physical Response Methodology. As just one example, I used to teach the reflexive pronouns mainly by acting out their meaning. Besides looking rather silly at times, (a professor who actually kissed himself in class), I was un-

aware save in a vague, diffused way, that some students still did not get a handle on the reflexive. I wondered what was wrong with them since they did not appreciate how much I was doing for them.

As I began to use the model, I grew increasingly sensitive to those with whom neither I nor the methodology matched - mainly the visual student. With practice and patience, I developed the visual representational channel to a point that it now seems natural and quite productive. Returning to the reflexive, I now include a visual experience among the activities. I have each student bring to class a small mirror. They use it according to the sentence. If the verb is active and has a direct object, the students hold the mirror away from themselves. If the verb is reflexive, then they look into the mirror. A small thing, but it seems to me that they have, as a class, learned faster and retained the information better. Incidentally, the attentive reader observes that the use of the mirror is consciously a visual experience but that the "unconscious" kinesic channel supports the visual experience of holding and turning the mirror and reinforces it.

From this recognition state of the brain's structure, the relation of language to experience, the predisposition of teaching in one of the channels, the preference of student's to associate information in a preferred association channel and representational style and the methodology's and text's assumptions relative to all the above emerges the next step, that of application. You will observe in the following information that there are two postures which the instructor will assume predicated on the task under consideration, a passive one and an active one. In general, the passive posture occurs as the instructor is observing the nonverbals and supporting language of a given individual's processing and accessing channel. Observations should be analytical and task specific: the identification of the predominant channel. I find myself most

frequently in this posture with individual students who are experiencing some major problems in the class and have come to my office for individual tutoring.

The other posture, the active one, occurs as the second step, when the instructor has decided to begin working in the language of a particular channel. I find myself using this posture in preparing general classroom information. I presume that all channels are available for use and prepare accordingly. It also follows the passive, observational posture with the individual tutored student. Its task is to transform the word and/or concept under consideration into the appropriate language/metaphors of each channel in order to enhance the matching process.

I begin the semester with a series of exercises to aid the students in identifying their preferred recall or representational world and its corresponding channel. I find this step to be of real value for it creates the dynamics for individualized self-instruction, which, finally, is the student's ultimate responsibility, in as much as it is he who must transform noise into meaningful associations. At this time, I also endeavor to find the student in each channel who has the highest awareness level and the ability to articulate well as resources for other students and myself.

I also give them a study sheet which has a slot for the concept or word to be learned, and three following slots into which they may place the particular expression of that concept into each of the sense language systems, visual, auditory and kinesic. In addition to sensitizing them to the existence of all the channels, these sheets become study and reference material.

In preparing classroom material, I imagine three kinds of processing styles. I understand that if each student is to have the opportunity of learning the material, I must transform the word or concept into the language of each of these styles. I search for an image of the concept/word, a kine for it, and a sound

for it. I know that if I have done this, then each student will be matched to the material and facilitated in the process of assimilation and eventual accessing.

After the presentation of the material, drills follow, with my exhortation, always to return to the concept's expression in their own channel. As I look for a means by which to lead them away from the structured drills to more "natural" language use, I find that games, which often contain associations across the dial, are the most integrative exercises.

The formulation of specific language examples for the same concept in all three channels is extremely important. The following should clarify what is meant by equivalent examples. The concept I wish to express, and I will use a broad psychological term for this purpose, is anxiety. For this word to acquire meaning, I may explain it in one of two ways. The first way is to describe it as does the dictionary. 1) A painful or apprehensive uneasiness of the mind usually over some impending or anticipated ill. 2) A state of being uneasy, apprehensive or worried about what may happen; concern about a possible future event. 3) Psychiatry: an intense state of this kind, characterized by varying degrees of emotional disturbance and psychic tension. For the uninformed, the noise created by these words will produce the very thing it is trying to describe, since the word is described not by experience but by other words. Or, I may present the word as an experience which the listener has already had but for which, let us assume, he does not yet have a name. If I wish to use this tactic, then I must transform the concept into the language of each channel. A visual experience of anxiety - the context is test taking - you need a solution to a serious problem. None occurs and you see nothing but blackness, a total absence of light. As you search harder, the blackness increases. You cannot find any light at the end of this tunnel.

An auditory equivalent of anxiety: You need a solution to a serious problem. None occurs and you hear many voices each suggesting conflicting and contradicting information. The static is deafening. If you could only tune in one voice at a time, then you could begin to eliminate the static and hear the final ringing answer.

A kinesic equivalent of anxiety: You need to solve a serious problem. You think a solution exists just there, beyond your grasp. As you step closer to reach for it, your feet give way into shifting sand, inexorably pulling you down and away from the answer.

Not withstanding the gothic nature of the language, it seems to me that the second way of presenting the word anxiety may be associated much more directly into the real experiences which the learner has endured. If this is so, then the concept is associated more completely and efficiently than in other words.

As one gets more practice in this kind of tripartite approach, one finds that N.L.P. represents a real opportunity for creativity for both instructor and student. As one reflects on what creativity means in this context, one eventually is brought to consider the role of imagination which, personally, I believe to be the most underutilized strength available in the learning process as students experience upper level educational settings. One may ask rhetorically, is not the trip through reality but a voyage of the imagination as it selects, edits and regenerates the experience of the trip? If this is so - and as I ponder it, it seems so - then what is the role of imagination in the foreign language class but the creation of a complete context made up on the spot which is then named by the vocabulary and concepts they are learning. Again, as I ponder it, do not many imaginative experiences seem to be more powerful than the stuff of life? I am thinking of the pervasive power of nightmares and horror films, both of which are retained in some psychic retina and which invade us

somehow. Correspondingly, in large measure, the ability of the imagination to take an external thing and give it meaning accounts for the success of the ugliest figure made hero - E.T. - It seems to me that we can tap into the same capacity to foster rapid growth in our students by presupposing, or pretending, that their imagination might create an equivalency to, if not a duplication of, the foreign cultural experience in which, by their own language channel, they create a meaningful "reality" and its names.

Please observe, then, that during the classroom presentational phase, I ask them to use their imagination to place the object into their world and later retrieve it. It is this level which is aided by realia, pictures, filmstrips and the like to begin to approximate a "real" cultural setting.

For purposes of example, I will demonstrate my procedures using food vacabulary. I sound out the word in Spanish, and they see it with the English. Then, they cover the vocabulary item and find the object in the accompanying pictures. They are obliged to touch the item and say it.

This procedure accomodates all students. The visual student sees the object in a context, either in the space occupied or surrounded by other objects. I ask them, in Spanish, if the object is bigger than or smaller than another, what is its color, and other visual stimulus questions. The kinesic student is asked to feel the food and in Spanish, is asked whether it is hot or cold, smooth or rough, heavy or light, etc. The auditory student is asked to hear conversations with the waiter, or see the item on the menu, to hear the food cooking and the banging of pans. And, for all the students, I ask them to taste it by reexperiencing it in their mind's tongue.

At this point, I oblige them to close their eyes and then go through all the vocabulary items, pausing after each to give them sufficient time to re-create it in the context in which they initially learned it. This is the point

which elicits their imagination.

Parenthetically, I find the most difficult students to deal with are those whose predominant channel is the auditory one, for the interference stems from hearing the word in English, rather than hearing sounds associated with the object in a cultural setting. So far, I have not found a way to by-pass this intermediate step of word (in Spanish) to word (in English) to, perhaps, the evocation of the object for which the word is a sign. What I have tried is to consciously work on creating the contextual strategy. For instance, for the student who heard "wedding" when she heard the word boda, I asked her to re-create the sounds of a wedding: music, chimes, voices of excitement, etc. I must admit, the labor far exceeded the outcome.

After they have heard the vocabulary lists with their eyes closed, they then are required to begin using the word by paring off and playing, "Can you stump me?" One student reads the word, the other must find the object in the picture. They are allowed to jump around and speed up the frequency as much as they want. After their comfort level is high, I ask them to begin to use the word in a "natural" way by extending out the contest of the object through imagining a situation in which the word naturally would be needed. Interrogatives serve this purpose well. When, who, with whom, how often, where and how much questions oblige the student to create a setting within which the answer (the given vocabulary word) is naturally and, hopefully, embedded.

It is also possible to review many prior language habits during this acquisition step. In the food lists, it is most appropriate to include review material of shopping expressions, comparisons, ser-estar, greetings and salutations, gustar, and the metric system.

The last exercise is a homework one. They consult a recipe and translate it. They then go shopping for it. They must describe the setting in which the

food is to be eaten - at home, at a restaurant, the occasion and the people involved. When they come to class. they are divided into groups and each individual is quizzed by others. A secretary keeps tabs of the event, and then is required to tell the rest of the class about the quizzed students "experiences".

This same kind of systematic procedure may be used for presenting a larger, conceptual kind of experience. I will explain this procedure with my presentation of the verbs ser-estar. As in the food experience, my personal objective is to respect all three processing styles.

The first requirement is to conceptualize the distinguishing discreteness of each of these word/concepts and that portion of the world each describes as opposed to the single verb "to be" in English. The key requirement for them is that they must discern the difference between permanence and nonpermanence. I shall forego the traditional presentation and leave it to the reader to infer the differences in the contrasting style which N.L.P. offers.

The requirement for me at this point is to assume the active posture. How do I transform the abstractness of these two words into the language of the three representational worlds? As in the food exercise, although the particular one I selected may be idiosyncratic to me, it does show respect for the process.

The students have read the textbook's representation. I continue to associate through sound the groupings of adjectives to produce some familiarity with the two groupings and the appropriate verb. Eventually, there exists some vague behavior to continue this slowly emerging habit. It is, in the main, the intellectualization dimension. However, experience has indicated that there is missing a reliable resource to be utilized in free discourse; often, under pressure, the intellectualization weakens and confusion increases.

At this point, I present an imaginative scenario that allows them to bypass the verbal descriptions, such as I explained with the word anxiety.

For the verb ser, I ask the students to imagine a rocky island surrounded by an agitated sea. The rock has withstood hurricanes, sea, and winds. It is immovable. Nonverbally, I clinch my left hand to represent the island and use my right hand to suggest the sea and the weather. Again, I repeat, "See how this island is immovable and permanent."

I then place them in a boat at a distance from the island yet heading in that direction. As they draw closer, they begin to see some flag poles rising from the island. As they draw closer, they begin to "see" the writings on the flags. Soon, they see that the flags' words, which are all the adjectives they have learned associated with permanence. A hue of rainbow colors and words arch above the island. And, I tell them, they may place new flag poles and flags as they wish and need into this same immovable, permanent place. While all the above is going on, I continue to hold the fist clenched as I suggest the flag poles and the flags with the right hand.

As this material is considered in the N.L.P. model, the visual student "sees" the island's permanence, sees the flag poles and the worded, colorful flags associated with it. The kinesic student "feels" the permanence of the island. He "senses" its immobility, feels the solidness of the flag poles. The auditory student "hears" the breaking waves, the wind in his ears and the flapping of the flags.

For the verb estar (nonpermanent, temporary), I hold up my right hand at chest height. I ask them to "see" a balloon being held by the hand with estar written upon it. They also see a face on it. They also see their favorite color. The balloon may rise and as it does so, it smiles. As it rises, I give them the adjectives of good emotions (contento, alegre, etc.) and good qualities (limpio, rico, sabroso). As the balloon falls, the face turns sad. The favorite color is replaced with the least favorite color. I associate negative emotions

(triste, cansado, enfermo) and negative qualities (sucio, roto, etc.) while the balloon continues to fall.

The visual student must create the balloon, investing it with meaning, "sees" it rise and fall, sees the colors and expressions appropriate to the direction the balloon moves, and can "see" the cartoon bubble which contains the associated words. The kinesic student can "feel" the hand being tugged upwards or tension leaving it as the balloon rises and falls, and note the general posture which corresponds to the state of emotion on the face of the balloon. The auditory student associates tone of voice and strength of it according to the balloon's expression.

In effect, what N.L.P. guidelines allow me to do here is to sum up in two discrete gestures the relative complexity of these two words as the principle resource they need to retrieve in the process of having "normal" discourse. In effect, just such as occurrence happens, for, in later moments, if their habits do not produce the right selection of verb and adjective, all I need to do is hold my hand in one of the two positions and trigger instantly all the associations to which they replace the confused one. I observe in their faces a quickening of recognition and decision making. I must infer from this that they do not over-intellectualize the problem by returning to the lengthy, often confusing, verbalization of the textbook description.

In addition, it is apparent that the value of the above presentation of ser-estar is not the particular content (my gestures, etc.), but rather in the demonstrated respect of the process of transforming an abstraction into a direct, imaginative, personal experience that they personally have made in each of the three channels. That is, the particular content need not be reproduced, indeed, may not be reproduced by another instructor for reasons of personality style. Rather, it is the grammar which is reproduceable with the given instructor's own

personal choice of the "vocabulary" with which the grammar becomes expressed that is unique to a given classroom setting and dynamic.

For individual students who still do not match up to the classroom activity, I return to the observational, passive posture. We find the reexperiencing or representational channel. Then, we move to the active posture, and begin to devise particular strategies with the specific purpose of converting the student into a transformer who must deal with the word in terms of the channel which predominates in him.

A particular student, with no prior language study, was literally suffering in class. When she came to the office, she chatted briefly about herself. She was working her way through college by employing and training young blacks in monogramming garments for four local clothing stores. Her total income each year was in excess of $15,000. She was also carrying a full academic load with a B average. She was only "unsuccessful" in the Spanish class. She was a talented, motivated individual who, it turns out, did not know how to get to her strength in order to match it up with the Spanish sound system.

As she talked, I assumed the passive posture. I watched her nonverbals, particularly observing eye movement, and listened to her verbal choices. It seemed immediately that she was a visual person. To reassure myself, I asked some questions to oblige her to search for the answer (What is your favorite place like? As a child, did you have a favorite pair of shoes?) She searched visually in both cases and her language followed - Shoes? They were pretty, shiny black, etc.

I chose, at this point, to assume she was visual and deduced that the visual channel available to her in her successful situations was unavailable to her for the Spanish sound system, for this seemed to be her main problem. As we went through the sound system, she did not repeat what I said, but what she

heard.

I can't say that our creation of an appropriate strategy was easy since there were two interferences functioning in me: I was just beginning to use N.L.P. guidelines and my inexperience showed; I was a product of the oral-aural training. This second consideration was the primary difficulty.

Specifically, we were endeavoring to deal with the letter D. I sounded out the word bandido and asked her to repeat it. There was no approximation to the heard sound of D and the produced one. Habits are hard to break, so I repeated the word bandido again, only louder. She repeated it her way, louder. After five repetitions, we were shouting at each other.

I then quietly asked her if she were repeating what she had heard. Just as quietly, she affirmed that she was.

Two choices were available to us. One, she could drop the course (I was hearing that refrain drifting through my ears as the echo from a multitude of faculty whose solution to mismatching was exactly that phrase) or I could assume she was not efficient with her current strategy. I choose the latter and was then placed in the position of using her strength by finding some way to help her begin to transform sound into that strength.

Again, the key was her preference to visualize. If we could create a picture-sound sequence, rather than a sound no picture sequence, then she would have reliable information upon which to build.

In effect, we did this, but it took a while. First, I asked her to stick her tongue out (a kinesic clue) and imagine seeing herself doing that. She blushed. "No, no, no way I can stick my tongue out at you." I asked her then to hold her tongue (kinesic) and pronounce "d". This notion was unacceptable. During the following pause, I asked myself: "What picture can I make which is reliable and safe for her?"

I drew a partially opened door. I asked her what she saw. "A funny looking D." I then drew the following.

She laughed, but began to see it in her mind's eye as I asked her to recall it for me. Each time she did, she smiled, so I assumed that the picture was now available to her when she needed it.

We began to go through a list of "d" words. Each time she saw the "d', she looked up, smiled and produced the sound. Quickly, and I remain in awe of the human mind, she placed the picture in the unconscious (she no longer visualized to have access to the letter) and preceeded to pronounce correctly the desired word containing the letter "d". When in doubt, she looked up, smiled, copied the picture, repeated the word with accuracy, and went on. (The reader has observed that the full sequence in this strategy is visual, then kinesic and finally auditory. The letter supplied the picture, the picture supplied tongue position, and the tongue position supplied the sound.)

The exact same process occurred with the letter "e" which to that time had completely escaped her. What picture would help?; a case of theme and variation once the strategy was ascertained. I drew a large lower case "e". As I talked I began to create a figure. I asked her if she had even seen, while walking in the mall, a dude dressed like this

who came up to her and said, "Eeee baby, what's happening?" She laughed and said, "You mean, like cool to the max?"

Within the first five trials, the picture dropped out of sight (she no longer looked for the picture by raising her eyes), but the habit remained and she pronounced the "e" successfully for herself, even with elegance.

Incidentally, a year after this experience, during which time I had not

seen her, I asked her to pronounce the "e" for me. She looked up, laughed, and said, "Eeee baby, I sure can." For her, obviously, pictures, images are her strength.

I have found the use of turning a letter into the sequence of picture, kine, and sound to have solved one of the most recurrent and inaccessible problems of pronunciation, the letter "r". As I indicated earlier, my own "natural" style was the sequential one of kinesic-auditory, auditory kinesic. No where did I have available the visual channel, and it was this lack which accounted for the impossible remediation of the letter "r" for visual students. Now, the use of the visual allows visual students the capability of processing and accessing it with accuracy and alacrity. I put a lower case "r" on the board. I then draw a face in profile around it and begin to thicken the horizontal member of the "r" until it appears to be a tongue touching the roof of the mouth.

Apparently, this picture allows them to go directly to the sound without having to "forget" the French and English sounds of the letter. Clearly, it is important for them to remember those sounds. Rather, it is necessary that they have a third choice with which to render the "r". They then learn which is the appropriate context for which of the three pronunciations.

Another student experienced difficulty with the two step resolution of making orthographic changes of radical verbs. From her perspective, she recognized the formal changes involved (e - ie, o - ue, e - i), in the text and within the exercises. But the information stayed on the map, (i.e., text) that the map showed a light on the shore as one approached the harbor, but she could not find it when she literally was at sea. Her strength for recalling the past (her representational channel) was the kinesic. The decision making process then involved the transformation of the concept into kinesic language.

Our starting point was the very basic notion of "stress", a kinesic ex-

perience of sound by definition. Each word has a stress and she had to feel it. Fortunately, I have a rock on my desk. I place it betwen two stacks of computer printouts. We began pronouncing three syllable words, in which the stress falls on the middle syllable: pregunta, pizarra, ventana, cuaderno, España. As we pronounced the words, I had her tap the computer stack on the left for the first syllable, push hard on the rock for the second syllable, and tap the computer stack on the right for the third. Apparently, the unyielding rock gave her the kinesic sequence for the language one of stressed syllable for she began "finding" the correct stress with other, new words.

We then moved to radical changing verbs, began with the first person plural in which the infinitive vowel is retained - poder - podemos - and repeated the above experience with the rock.

At this juncture, we observed that radical changing verbs "disintegrate" when the vowel of the root receives the stress - poder - puedo, volver - vuelvo, acostarse - me acuesto, recordar, recuerdo. "They" can't "carry" the weight and break under it. At this juncture, technically this information was still auditory and visual.

Fortunately, my desk - a veritable cornocopia of goodies - offered up an orange which we substituted for the rock. As we began to conjugate the verbs, each time the root's vowel would yield to other letters, I asked her to press down, hard, on the orange and asked her if she could feel it give under the weight. Soon, like magic, and with a gentle and wise smile on her face, she began to make the appropriate changes. (Incidentally, I have never forgiven my desk for not offering a slightly over-ripe peach. However, it now contains a balloon who patiently awaits the service of radical changing verbs and kinesic individuals.

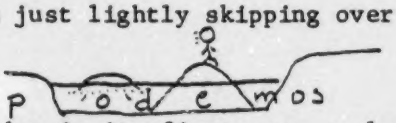
The student's backup representational channel was the visual one. I felt

it imperative that her strategy finally become one of seeing the potential of the vowel to change, then, feel the change, and finally say it. So, we needed to create a picture with plenty of kinesic energy in it.

When she affirmed that she had to jump across a stream by stepping on a stone in midstream, a visual-kinesic picture emerged. We drew her on one side of a bank ready to cross the stream by stepping on a rock midstream. The murky water hid the fact that the "rock was really a large turtle."

I asked her to see herself jump on the "rock", feel the surprise as it yielded under her weight, and sense how she had to hurry or sink into the water. Under the picture, we placed the word poder as follows:

After the fatigue of sensing the yielding "turtle", I asked her if she would like to step on an unyielding rock upon which to gather herself for the scramble up the other bank while just lightly skipping over the "turtle".



Under this picture, we placed poder in its first person plural form. We continued this activity and moved to e-ie verbs and e-i verbs. We ended the session by asking her to press the rock or the orange as she moved through the text's drills. She did so with elan and joy.

The principle of matching student representational channels to a specific example within that channel as a sample of the concept - as illustrated above - conforms to the requirement of respecting student uniqueness and permits the student to generalize in the future from the sample. The student is as sea, but sees the beacon and reaches safely the shore.

In practice, I find that once the students experience the "how" of transformation in a given example, they quickly add to it their own repertoire for

personal resources in the future. Thus, the additional requirement of creating autonomy for learning - taking new concepts and redoing it or transforming it in their representation system - is met.

Two questions remain: How much time is spent with a student? and What if an instructor is not creative "that way"? The answer to the first is that both of the prior cases of the visual and kinesic students took 15 minutes to develop. Even had they taken more time, I would have not begrudged it, since I was getting practice in the process and building up a repository of specific examples for later classroom use at one and the same time.

The second question - I am not creative that way - is an opportunity gained. If an instructor wishes to extend his matching technique, he has available a plethora of possibilities in existing texts. As one examines them with the N.L.P. concept of visualizing, hearing and feeling as the criteria, it is possible to find drills, exercises, games, presentations of both grammar and cultural material which lend themselves to each channel. Specifically, in order to begin to apply N.L.P. guidelines in a practice/setting and to develop some experience with them, I recommend the use of G. Ronald Freeman's activities manual, Intercambios. Examine the Mas Actividades sections and evaluate each according to which channel is most utilized for the production of language.

My hope in sharing these ideas is that the interested reader will find, as I have, a personal growth through self-discovery, an increasing awareness that, no matter what else occurs in a class, first and foremost, it is a communication process, a gratitude for the work done by N.L.P. which permits us to control systematically the communication process, a growing respect for the individual learner, and, finally, a sense of flexibility with increased resources, which enables us to enhance the environment in such a way as to foment risk-free, high yield learning.

FOOTNOTES

[1]N.L.P. has published a number of volumes. For those volumes which seem to me to present their basic approach most cogently and indicate the diversity of its expression and application, see BIBLIOGRAPHY on Neuro-Linguistic Programming. (p. 40, "A lot of school children have problems simply because of a mismatch between the primary system of the teacher and that of a child.")

[2]Sperry, Roger: Anecdote given during his presentation on "The Two Halves of the Brain," Conference, 1978, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[3]Piaget, J. Structuralism. Basic Books, Inc., 1970, New York, pps. 3-16. See particular use of the concepts of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation. In addition, this paper's main concern is, in piagetian terms, the nature and relationship between the concrete and abstract levels of psychological development.

[4]The N.L.P. model also recognizes the tremendous value that a "word" has in reclassifying/restructuring past experiences or creating new experiences. The technical word is reframing. As an example, self-fulfilling prophecy is seen as a need for the individual to perpetuate his identity and resist change. In their therapeutic practices, the therapist's purpose is to create for the client a new label or new dynamic which will free the client from the self-limiting behavior of the prophecy. Example: Client: "I'm so dumb." Therapist: "Aren't you lucky. You have so much growth to look forward to."

It seems to me that reframing is the heart of the cross-cultural experience. The old structure fails to produce the desired outcome in the other culture. Instead, the other culture will only work for the individual if he infers from the behavior of that culture the existence of a structure in which no conflicts exist. A classic example of the sequence word-experience and its power to create new attitudes about another culture in the learner is found in the comparison/contrast of the dative of interest construction in Spanish and the simple declarative statement in English: "I dropped the antique dish," and "Se me cayo el plato" (The dish dropped itself on me). Assigned responsibility differs in each sentence and, by inference, in each model of which the sentence is an expression. As the learner moves from the English sentence and assumed model to the Spanish sentence, he must begin to create a model from within the confines of the Spanish sentence itself which explains the sentence. Until that creation occurs, a true dual perception of the same event - the sign of a purveyor of cross-culturality - can be said not to exist. However, for the beginning learner, the sequence of experience-word remains the more appropriate one.

[5]Bandler, Richard & Grinder. Frogs to Princess, p. 9, 24-27, 31-40.

[6]Following is a list of high frequency words/expressions the observer could be expected to hear for each of the representational worlds.

Visual world: Nouns: glance, image, perception, perspective, picture, reflection, shape/form, view, viewpoint
Verbs: focus, imagine, reflect, see, show, view, visualize
Adjectives: colors, bright, clear, colorful, dark, hazy, obscure, pretty, ugly

Phrases/sentences: a brilliant idea, a crystal clear lecture; "I see what you mean;" "I haven't the foggiest notion;" He focuses well and sheds a lot of light.
Auditory: Nouns: channel, echo, harmony, message, pitch, receiver, scale, sender, static, tone.
Verbs: Discuss, hear, listen, telecast, tune-in/out.
Adjectives: clear, deep, loud, noisy, penetrating, quiet, scratchy, soft, whiny
Phrases/sentences: A good idea - it's clear as a bell; sounds good; "I hear what you are saying;""You're coming through loud and clear"; He really tunes in.
Kinesic: Nouns: burden, cover-up, cut-up, grip, hold, rock, scale
Verbs: Dig, feel, strike-out, tense-up, touch, yields
Adjectives: clammy, firm, flat, frizzy, gentle, heavy, prickly, pushy, slippery, soft
Phrases/sentences: A solid idea; a worn-out notion; a smooth delivery; "I have a hold on that one;" he is a slippery person; he's sharp as a tack.

[7]N.L.P.'s literature calls for an amplification of the predominate representational world and its relationship to the back up ones. Certain tasks require that there be a sequence from one of these channels to another. In practice, the actual problem solving sequence, called a tote, may be quite complex. One example which shows the interdependency of two different systems in specified sequence is typing. The visual image connects immediately to the kinesic, and, if properly trained and disciplined, smooth correct typing follows. Conversely, if this connection is weakened by accessing the sound system while the visual-kinesic sequence operates, then rate and correction will decrease accordingly. Those who type their own manuscripts while also editing know this kind of interference. In any event, I have found the information related in the body of these notes to suffice for increasing the rate and comfort of learning in the pedagogical setting.

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